



Friends of Fort Wooster

c/o Elm City Parks Conservancy
26 Atwater Street, New Haven, CT 06513

Kevin J. Maher, Sue Marchese, Co-chairmen
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Press Release

For immediate distribution

HISTORIC FORT WOOSTER PARK HOSTS FLAGPOLE DEDICATION AND CELEBRATION ON JULY 5, 2014, THE 235TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF NEW HAVEN

June 30, 2014 (New Haven, CT) The Friends of Fort Wooster (www.fortwooster.com), a non-profit organization associated with the Elm City Parks Conservancy, is hosting a flagpole dedication and flag raising ceremony on Saturday, July 5, 2014.

The celebration is being held in conjunction with the Grand Lodge of Connecticut's David Wooster Day, an annual gathering of CT Masonic lodges paying tribute to the Revolution War hero and "father of Connecticut Freemasonry," David Wooster—for whom the park is named—who was the founding Worshipful Master of the New Haven Hiram Lodge No. 1 in 1750 and died at the battle of Ridgefield in 1777.

The event, which begins at 12:00 noon at Fort Wooster Park in New Haven, will be hosted by the Friends of Fort Wooster and will include the dedication by the flagpole, donated by the Grand Lodge of Connecticut and local Masonic Lodges, in honor of David Wooster, and the presentation of the American flag, donated by the Mary Clapp Wooster chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Colonial era re-enactors and an honor guard contingent from Fort Nathan Hale & Black Rock Fort, also of New Haven, will be present.

Fort Wooster, once known as Beacon Hill, on the East Shore of New Haven, overlooks New Haven Harbor and was the site of a beacon established in 1775 by American patriots to warn of enemy approach. On July 4, 1779, British troops were sighted in Long Island Sound heading towards New Haven. Signal guns were fired from nearby Black Rock Fort (near current Lighthouse Point) and a signal fire was set atop Beacon Hill as well as East Rock and West Rock to warn residents to prepare to fight. On July 5, 1779, British troops landed on the east shore of New Haven Harbor. American patriots bravely resisted a large force of invading troops, including troops on and about Beacon Hill. The British invasion of New Haven resulted in 56 English soldiers killed, wounded, or MIA. The American loss was 23 killed, 15 wounded, and 12 taken prisoner. Many homes and properties were burned and destroyed. Beacon Hill was renamed Fort Wooster in August 1814 to honor Major-General David Wooster.

“This is a remarkable occasion,” said Kevin Maher, co-chairman of the Friends of Fort Wooster. “We have been working with a small band of volunteers, including the amazingly generous local Masonic lodges, to bring this forgotten park back to life. Not long ago the park was overgrown, neglected, littered with trash, and a haven for partiers and paintballers. No one knew it existed, let alone that it was a Revolutionary War battle site. Now, thanks to clean-up efforts, we’re able to invite the public to get to know this wonderful neighborhood park, walk the trails, and learn a little about its remarkable history.”

“We are so honored to be hosting this event this year” said Friends of Fort Wooster co-chair Sue Marchese. “We’ve spend two years clearing the area surrounding the earthen works fort which is a large part of what we are all about. The goal of the Friends of Fort Wooster is not just to make this a livable park that the neighborhood can enjoy and be proud of, but to highlight the historical significance of the events that occurred here, honor the deeds of our forefathers, and the park as a vehicle for teaching generations of New Haven residents about the history that is present literally in their own backyards.”

The July 5th Fort Wooster Park celebrations are open to the public.

Fort Wooster Park is located between Townsend and Beacon Avenues in New Haven with parking available on Beacon Avenue and at Fort Nathan Hale.

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